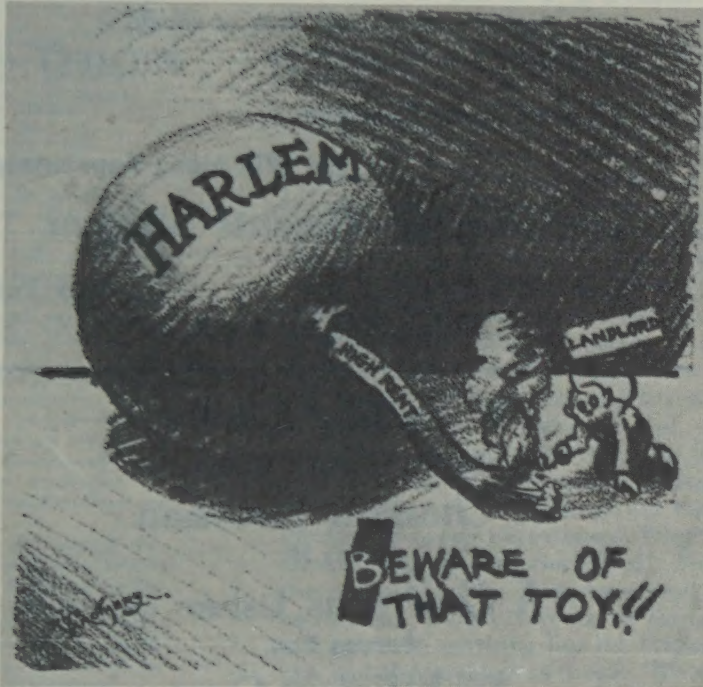


The Negro Needs EDUCATION

Vol. I

JANUARY, 1936

No. 9



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and
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A Welfare Organization

Established March 26th, 1935

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- A 1 The education of our people.
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- B 1 In view of the fact that discrimination hinders rather than aids the progress of a nation, the urgent need for employment of our people in more varied fields than now exists, is obvious.
- 2 In view of the rapid progress of our people since emancipation, inherent ability and competence as a part of their make-up cannot be justly denied. Consequently encouragement and promotion of Negro initiative and businesses on a larger scale.
- C Whereas housing and housing conditions are deplorable and whereas unscrupulous landlords, taking advantage of the congestion which now exists in Harlem, have resorted to the exploitation of our people in the community, a peaceful, intelligent solution is advocated.
- D Proper representation of our people in State and National legislatures.

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EDITORIALS

...

A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO EVERYONE!

January is the most significant of the twelve months that go to make up the year. It is, because of its primary position. People shed their old garments of disillusionment, disappointment and broken vows to adorn themselves with new life, new resolutions and a strong feeling of fortitude and courage. "This year may be better than last year," is a tonic that has stood the test of ages and has saved countless lives from an unhappy end, chiefly because it contains the ingredient of hope. This tonic is taken by more people in January than at any other period throughout the year, regardless of former experiences. They feel rejuvenated, emancipated, electrified! And so, with the return of a New Year, we cannot escape the contagion. With reference to Harlem, we do not conceive anything but the brightest of vision and the greatest of hope. We reflect and we visualize! Who can deny that Harlem has progressed by leaps and bounds during the year ending December 31, 1935? By the same token why shouldn't we feel happy in advance that December 31, 1936 shall find us nearer our goal?

We have many problems to solve, the most pressing among them being Housing and Education. Stimulated by the progress of last year and imbued with the spirit of the New Year, there ought not to be any doubt of our ability to arrange the most difficult "jig-saw" puzzle.

Again, a very happy New Year to everyone!

LACK OF DEPENDABILITY MARS OUR PROGRESS

By C. A. PETIONI, M.D.

• • •

One of the greatest curses which beset the Negro in America, is lack of dependability. It is to be experienced on all sides among our group regardless of education, station, or profession. In New York City, particularly, where manifestations of individualism can be found in every walk of life, where the struggle for existence is so keen, and where neighbor is made soon to be suspicious of neighbor, the spoken word, or the definite promise or agreement is generally regarded lightly as of no avail so long as it is to the interests of one or other of the parties not to carry out the obligations under the agreement. It does not matter how serious the undertaking, how exalted the person, how necessary the services, or further how much money is involved, so long as the contract is not sealed and signed, and even under those circumstances there is always the possibility that the agreement will not be carried out.

The writer was once employed by a corporation in which there was a great deal of activity and where many of the employes occupied varying degrees of responsibility. One of the slogans of the firm was "verbal instructions don't go." It seems to me that the spirit of the age is in accordance with that slogan among the members of the other group and that it has percolated into the minds of the members of our party.

This is to be regretted as it eventually works more to the detriment of our people than to others who have a more specialized and systematized method of pursuing their way in life.

In the employment field, we often hear the lamentations of the public and the newspapers as to the fact that daily the colored man is losing the preference which he once had in many occupations in the City. Jobs such as porters, waiters, elevator operators and many others of a menial nature are daily being lost to our group. No one seems to have taken time to probe to the root of the trouble. It is suggested that it is due in main part to the fact that these occupations which require regular attendance and punctuality are passing out of the hands of our group because of their particular habits, principally that of lack of dependability. Our men seem not to be willing to do consistent work for any long period. They cannot in the main be depended upon to get on the job at the prescribed hour and consequently they not only lose the position but they give the race a black eye and bar the portals for further employment in that direction, to future applicants from our group.

In the matter of business enterprises the same can be stated. Many of our group have more money than knowledge of

business. Many others have more time and knowledge than money. It should therefore be easy for them to get together and work together for their mutual benefit. But sad to relate it is almost impossible to arrive at some proper understanding which could be depended upon for execution according to plan. In some manner or other, one or the other of the parties decides to lie down on the job and leave the responsibility to his partner, while collecting the emolument agreed upon, if possible or the other, who had promised to furnish the sinews of war, suddenly discovers for some reason that he cannot carry out his part of the transaction, regardless of the inconvenience and embarrassment of his partner. After one or two such experiences, naturally, there is engendered into the minds of the enterprising, sentiments of distrust and lack of cooperation with the result that up to the present in Harlem most of the business efforts are carried on by individuals to the detriment of expansion and the establishment of reputable and progressive businesses which would redound to the credit of our people, and be an encouragement to the younger generations in search of outlets of their education and training.

Whether this is due to the system of education or lack of education, cannot definitely be stated here. But it is obvious that in these respects the Negro Needs EDUCATION. Until our leaders realize these facts and proceed in and out of season to din into the ears of their constituents the above facts there can be no cessation of the lamentations which assail our ears at home and in the pulpits and our eyes in the newspapers. Our people should be taught to realize that "a man's word is his bond." Our people should be made to understand that business undertakings are sacred and must be carried out. Our people must be taught a sense of honor; and taught to stick to principle rather than personal interest once an agreement has been arrived at. Further they should be impressed with the fact that the future of the race depends upon their individual actions, and any breach not only affects the individual but the whole community and race at large.

Until the cooperative spirit is infused into our hearts; until we learn that we are our brothers' keepers, there can be no progress. When our less fortunate brethren are taught to understand that when and as long as they occupy a job or position they should scrupulously and faithfully carry out all the conditions, they will be able to regain their lost reputations and to maintain themselves the better as creditable and dependable citizens in the community.

WEST INDIAN WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD

By F. JOS. BAILEY

• • •

During the last twenty years, the writer has been confronted with many searching questions with regard to West Indians living in and outside of the United States. Many of these questions have been directed especially to West Indian women. They have been asked by people from all stations of life, and with varying degrees of intelligence. Obviously, they seem for some reason to be interested in the West Indians, hence constantly seeking information on their life and activities.

The following are some of the questions which have been asked (1) Why do the majority of the West Indian professional men not return to their native home after they have completed their education? (2) Is there any essential difference in the cultural point of view of the West Indian Negro and the American Negro? (3) Why do the women from the West Indies fail to take greater advantage of the educational opportunities in the United States? These and many other questions of similar nature have been asked, and the writer feels that probably there is some justification for them. If they have not been answered, and cannot be answered satisfactorily, no one need to be grieved or offended. One thing however, it will be agreed that these questions should stimulate thought among the West Indians themselves; and secondly, the questions do indicate that native Americans, both white and colored, are interested in the life of a people who come among them, even though the interest may or may not be real.

On careful observation, it cannot escape the attention that the foregoing questions are not without some social significance, which may be directly or indirectly related to the whole Negro life in America. For it must be admitted that all people of color entering the United States cannot escape the terrible effects of American race issues. This being true, these questions should not be entirely ignored or overlooked, or be stripped of their importance.

The statement of Mr. Calvin may reveal something of a deeper meaning of the inquiries when he pointed out that:

"In order that the West Indians and Americans to unite, each side must appreciate the peculiar customs and habits of the other, for, the major interest of both groups can best be secured by their united and concerted action. Anything racial in these United States, minor differences, such as, accents, social customs, etc., must be tolerated, in each by the other, in order to fight the larger and more important American Race Prejudice.

"We Americans have the West Indians with us whether some of us like it or not, and he is apparently here to stay. He is considered a Negro right along with us by our white Ameri-

can brother. Now, the only thing left is for us to understand the West Indian and let him understand us and then work together."

Whatever else this statement might mean, it does indicate at least a favorable attitude on the part of Colored America, not only to establish a better understanding, but expresses a desire on the part of the people to work together amicably toward some social desirable end. This attitude in itself, therefore, would seem to partially justify the above mentioned questions.

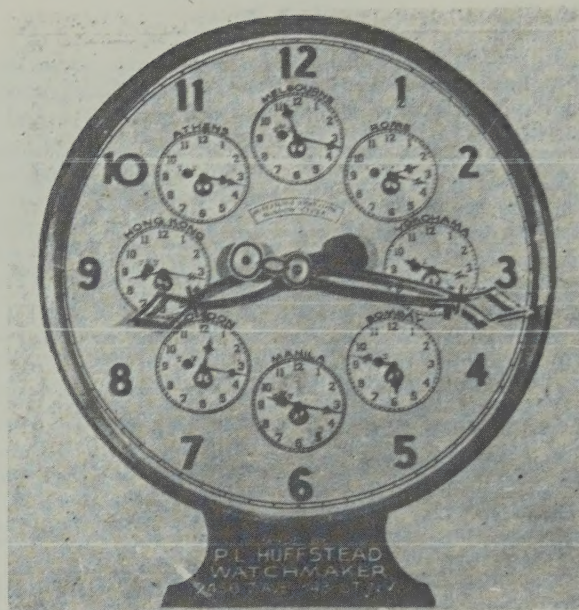
To briefly discuss the last of the questions, namely, Why do the women from the West Indies fail to take greater advantage of the educational opportunities in the United States.

While the topic is not free from personal interest, yet there are larger or equally as large interests of many others who are seeking facts and unbiased opinions on the subject. Quite recently it was re-introduced by someone here who is apparently interested, and who wishes to get the facts as far as possible.

The questions to which this discussion addresses itself, to my mind, presents four important subordinating questions, which are necessary to the approach of an intelligent understanding. (1) Is there any difference in the cultural background or point of view in the men and women from the West Indies? The justification for this question is obvious. A knowledge of any difference favoring the men in the cultural background of both West Indian men and women would indicate a possible reason why the West Indian women do not take greater advantage of the educational opportunities. For instance, if it is discovered that schooling facilities and opportunities in the West Indies for men and women are not the same, then it would be reasonable to expect that any difference favoring the men would be attributed to the differences in school facilities and opportunities in the West Indies, and such difference or differences would likely effect or contribute to the seeming indifference of the West Indian women, in not taking advantage to a larger extent, of the educational opportunities here. Of course the underlying assumption is that the men take advantage of the educational opportunities in greater proportion.

(2) Are the women from the West Indies ambitious? It is important to know whether or not the women from the West Indies are ambitious. In the first place, ambition is a potent factor in enhancing the aims and ideals of individuals and groups. On the basis of experience which is common to all, if this factor is absent there is usually an arrest of one's

Continued on Page 8



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1. Costs over \$1,000.
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and
EDUCATION
MARCH 19th, 1936

BENEVOLENT ORGANIZATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY.

THEIR SCOPE AND POSSIBILITIES

By HELENA M. BENTA

• • •

The truth of the statement, "Man is a gregarious animal" has been repeatedly demonstrated wherever any group of human beings find themselves on common ground. The desire for close contact has prompted all kinds of alliances including the form so well known to us as Benevolent Societies.

In the United States of America and particularly in New York City, there live thousands of people from all parts of the world. These people have come from places, each with a different geographical configuration, producing different staple products under different climatic conditions, with different traditions, historical associations, mental outlook, religion, languages, and methods of communication either internally or externally which do not always tend to unite them. The presence of these individuals in this metropolis may be explained by the usual desires for wider education and experience, to satisfy wanderlust, and in the majority of cases to gain economic freedom of a kind.

Whenever a person or group migrates to new lands, an orientation to the new surroundings must necessarily be made. Disappointments, illusions and new hardships are common, and until the new adjustment is made the immigrant endures considerable handicaps. Out of these experiences have sprung the number of Benevolent Organizations to be found in any community. The more intelligent and farsighted of the various groups realize the grim necessity for united action and mutual support by which those who would so provide would be placed beyond to reach of public charity. These efforts are in some cases the sincere desire for the well-being or comfort of the incoming immigrant or the safeguarding that of those already established. The general scope of the work has been to care for the sick, not only by providing immediate aid, but also hospitalization, to bury the dead, and to promote social contacts. This program has been extended wherever the need and demand have developed to include educational projects and to encourage an open political outlook.

Conspicuous among the numerous Benevolent Organizations in New York City are those of the various West Indian Islands. The effect of these has been to weld in an interesting way the sympathies and aspirations in the common problems of the different island groups. These organizations serve more than anything else to unite and stimulate patriotism and loyalty, attributes which would undoubtedly be lessened in this city with its widely varying attitudes and modes of living. The feeling of kinship is strengthened by regular contacts if only in the meeting rooms.

The work of the purely Benevolent Society is not to be mistaken for that of secret societies which demand for admittance definite qualifications and impose oaths which the average individual fears to infringe. All that is necessary in the case of the applicant is established proof that he is a native or descendant of a particular place or the wife or husband of such a native. Residence, in a specific place for a given period is in some cases accepted as eligibility. In addition the person is required to be of sound moral character as testified to by the sponsor who recommends him to membership. The ritual of admission, if one may call it by that name, is usually a simple cordial welcome and devoid of any pomp. Certain other simple forms obtain on occasions like Funeral Services, but the absence of formal attire and elaborate trappings lend a homely atmosphere to any session.

Despite the influence of cohesion wielded by the various Benevolent Organizations, curiously enough, they tend quite perceptibly to engender breaches in Negro solidarity. The members of each branch are zealous for the improvement and welfare of that particular group, caring only in a detached way about the problems of similar bodies. More than one effort has been made to amalgamate the numerous groups in one. Such an organization would, because of its superior numerical strength and collective leadership, be a stronger and much more effective instrument for good. Because of selfishness on the part of the leaders and the fear of losing identities, each such movement has proved abortive. It is to be hoped that in the face of present day situations, the need and effect of mass action will be fully realized and give the necessary impetus to any new project for closer union and solidarity.

A question that must be faced and answered is: "Do Benevolent Organizations justify themselves?" The fault usually found is that the scope of work is insufficient, and is a just complaint. This must not be taken to mean that there is no value to that which is done. In order, however, that the maximum amount of good may be derived it is necessary to widen the programs now in operation and to keep an open door of friendliness with all similarly engaged. The Benevolent Organization in spite of all its deficiencies encourages a certain unity of purpose, fosters brotherliness and consideration for others, and if rightly used could become a power for good in any community.

ETIQUETTE OF POLITE SOCIETY

• • •

COMMON ERRORS IN WRITING AND SPEAKING

There are many popular errors in writing and speaking our language. It may be well to notice some of them here.

We often hear the phrase, from educated lips at that, "Between you and I." It should be, "Between you and me."

Many persons say, "What beautiful bread!" It should be, "What nice bread!"

Instead of, "A new pair of shoes," say, "A pair of new shoes."

Do not say, "Restore it back to me," but "Restore it to me."

Instead of, "I seldom or ever meet her," say, "I seldom meet her."

Instead of, "If I am not mistaken," say, "If I mistake not."

Do not say, "Not no such thing," but "Not any such thing."

Instead of, "I had rather walk," say, "I would rather walk."

Instead of, "Let you and I," say, "Let you and me."

Instead of, "Rather warmish," say, "Rather warm."

Instead of, "What a nice view," say, "What a beautiful view."

Do not say, "Bred and born." It should be, "Born and bred."

Instead of, "If I was him," say, "If I were he."

Do not say, "I have less friends than you." It should be, "I have fewer friends than you."

In reply to the question, "Who is there?" or, "Who is it?" say, "I," or, "It is I," and not, "Me," or, "It is me."

"Whether I be present or no," is wrong. It should be, "Whether I be present or not."

Instead of, "I had better go," say, "It were better that I should go."

"A quantity of people," is wrong. It should be, "A number of people."

"Six weeks back," is a barbarism. It should be, "Six weeks ago."

"A new pair of gloves." It should be, "A pair of new gloves."

EVIL SPEAKING

Beware of evil speaking. In the eyes of all right-minded persons much that you have said recoils upon your own head, for no one has quite the same opinion of an individual after having listened to a series of scandalous stories from his lips. Hence, for your own sake, as well as for that of others, eschew the vice of evil speaking as a very pestilence.

Let young ladies have a care how they speak lightly or contemptuously of one another at any time, but more especially when conversing with men. Nothing, as a rule, is more prejudicial to a woman, in the estimation of a man, than this all-too-prevalent habit. No matter what the faults of your sister-woman may be, condone them gently, or if this be impossible, let a silence that is golden fall about the subject.

Unhesitatingly acknowledge a woman's beauty or talent, and instead of detracting from your own merits, it will enhance them in the eyes of all. A young man was once heard counselling his sister from the depths of his own experience as a social favorite. "Never," said he, "say one word against a girl to any young man. It only puts you down in their estimation. Say something pretty and complimentary about them if you can; if not, keep still." And his advice was words fitly spoken, that are, indeed, "like apples of gold in pictures of silver."



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WEST INDIAN WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD

Continued from Page 3

aims and purposes. It follows, therefore, that if it is discovered that the women from the West Indies are not ambitious, then a partial or possible reason will be apparent for their not taking greater advantage of America's educational life and institutions.

(3) Does the social and economic life of America effect or influence the ambition, educational outlook and aspirations of the women from the West Indies when they come to this country? The importance of this question lies in the fact, that a knowledge of the effect (favorable or unfavorable) of the social and economic conditions, would give a possible explanation for the seeming indifference on the part of the women to educational advantages. For example, if it is found that finance is in part responsible for the women from the West Indies not attending secondary schools, colleges and professional schools in larger numbers, then it seems fair to point to finance as a contributing factor in the retardation of their educational aspirations.

(4) What effects, if any, would the assumed retardation of the West Indian women have on their social status in America with special reference to marriage? The justification for this question may be seen by noting the fact that education effects proper social adjustment hence the more intelligent one becomes, one's social adjustment becomes easier and highly facilitated. Marriage, therefore, being a natural and important social institution and which requires an intelligent approach, to foster proper and desirable adjustment, seems to lend itself to scrutinization if the marriage is contracted between persons of different social outlook, and whose intellectual equipment for adjustment differ in essential fundamentals.

It must be borne in mind, that marriage is not the only social desirable end in education, but it seems to be the one to which much attention has been given. There are many other social accomplishments in which the West Indian women might have excelled and make valuable contributions to the social and economic life of the country. Furthermore, it must be definitely borne in mind that whatever the marriage status of the West Indian women with American and West Indian men, it may not be a result of the lack of educational opportunities. A large number of other variables or important factors might have entered in, such as, the West Indian women because of their industry and thrift, have become economically independent, hence the need for marriage far driven back.

The history of women in the West Indies is inextricably interwoven with that of men. There can be no dividing line drawn between the cultural development of both sexes, with regard to those agencies which make for culture and refinement.

Women in the West Indies share the same experiences with women all over the world. In the early days of the world history, they were very much the weaker sex, and it was generally considered unnecessary to recognize them as being influential in any way. In those early days they were drawers of water; then, the delights of courtship were practically unknown, because parents literally sold their daughters to prospective wooers. Gradually, through the course of time, conditions for women everywhere have changed and are changing, and we need not question their influence and ability. Today women are more enlightened, more accomplished and capable than at any period in the history of the world. Their influence is strongly felt. They have raised to the status of being their husband's equal in intellect, and in some instances, superior. They are their husband's guide and philosopher.

The great transformation in the status of women over the civilized world, has also affected the women of the West Indies. It has given to them equal cultural opportunities as do the men in every respect.

There are in the West Indian Islands schools and colleges of various levels and although in the main, they are not co-educational, the curricula offerings and extracurricular activities which promote physical and intellectual culture are practically identical. The elementary schools of the West Indies which provide the basic tools for learning are opened to both sexes alike. They have the same basic educational opportunities and facilities.

The men are prepared for trade in technical schools, etc.; the women are prepared in other craft, such as, millinery, art, etc. On the other hand in the profession of teaching and nursing, and even preaching the men find in the women a strong rival. Thus, in the light of these, it is evident that so far as cultural background is concerned, there is no difference, and if there is any, it is negligible.

The women of the West Indies assert great cultural influence, and if culture and influence are transmitted from parents to off-spring, the fact might be indicated that the West Indian men who excel in America have great claims to mothers of West Indian culture.

It has been pointed out in the foregoing discussion that the women of the West Indies follow in the trend of present advancement. They do not content themselves to be mere water-drawers in education, politics, social service, business and the professions; they have advanced. It cannot be denied that their attainment is mostly due to their own perseverance, patience, intellect and pertinacity. These positions have been reached on the basis of ambition.

In a book entitled "British Guiana Women's Centenary Effort," it is stated that, "The very laudable and ambitious undertaking of the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association to work the Centenary of the union of the Government of the three countries of British Guiana, by the compilation of a book is, in itself an earnest expression of the determination of our women folk to play their part in guiding the destinies of our 'Magnificent Province' during the early years of the new country. All honor to them and to their aspirations."

What is true of the women of British Guiana, is also true true of the women at home and abroad; through their ambition they have achieved, and are still achieving, a promising future.

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